

In the Claims:

Entry of the following amendments to place the claims into condition for allowance is respectfully requested:

1.-28. (cancelled)

29. (previously presented) A method for purifying the exhaust gas from an internal combustion engine having an exhaust-gas purification system including a nitrogen oxide storage catalytic converter and an SCR catalytic converter downstream of the nitrogen oxide storage catalytic converter, comprising the steps of:

supplying the nitrogen oxide storage catalytic converter with exhaust gas containing an excess of oxidizing constituents;

supplying the nitrogen oxide storage catalytic converter with exhaust gas containing an excess of reducing constituents; and

supplying the nitrogen oxide storage catalytic converter, between the oxidizing constituents supplying step and the reducing constituents supplying step, with an exhaust gas which has a lower content of oxidizing constituents than in the oxidizing constituents supplying step and a lower content of reducing constituents than in the reducing constituents supplying step,

wherein the step between the oxidizing constituents supplying step and the reducing constituents supplying step is terminated at the earliest when the nitrogen oxide storage catalytic converter is predominantly filled by exhaust gas delivered in step between the oxidizing constituents supplying step and the reducing constituents supplying step.

30. (cancelled)

31. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 29, wherein the nitrogen oxide storage catalytic converter is formed as a parallel arrangement of a first nitrogen oxide storage catalytic converter element and a second nitrogen oxide storage catalytic converter element, and

the first nitrogen oxide storage catalytic converter element and the second nitrogen oxide storage catalytic converter element are operated alternately by switching of a switching device arranged to selectively direct exhaust gas into said elements.

32-35. (cancelled)

36. (currently amended) ~~[[The]]~~ A method as claimed in claim 28, for purifying the exhaust gas from an internal combustion engine having an exhaust-gas purification system including a nitrogen oxide storage catalytic converter and an SCR catalytic converter downstream of the nitrogen oxide storage catalytic converter, comprising the steps of:

supplying the nitrogen oxide storage catalytic converter with exhaust gas containing an excess of oxidizing constituents;

supplying the nitrogen oxide storage catalytic converter with exhaust gas containing an excess of reducing constituents; and

supplying the nitrogen oxide storage catalytic converter, between the oxidizing constituents supplying step and the reducing constituents supplying step, for a predetermined period with a constant exhaust gas composition which has a lower content of oxidizing constituents than in the oxidizing constituents supplying step and a lower content of reducing constituents than in the reducing constituents supplying step.

wherein in step of supplying the nitrogen oxide storage catalytic converter between the oxidizing constituents supplying step and the reducing constituents supplying step, an air/fuel ratio which set to control exhaust gas composition is set to be slightly greater than 1, such that the oxidizing constituents in the exhaust gas have an oxygen excess of 1% or less.

37. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 36, wherein the air/fuel ratio is approximately 1.05.

38-39. (canceled)